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NSC BRIEFING

1 October 1967

WORLD REACTION TO LITTLE ROCK EVENTS

- I. Events in Little Rock have drawn the largest volume on record of Soviet comment on the negro problem in the United States. Objective coverage has been supplemented by commentaries designed to discredit the federal position on this issue.
 - A. This volume is about normal for any major news story--4% of Moscow Radio's time (for instance, situation in Syria averages about 5%).
 1. Week of 10 September volume was much higher, however, as Soviets sought to mask UN debate on Hungary.
 - B. Moscow charged that Washington's attitude is "really one of connivance" with Southern racial extremists and declared that "US racial discrimination is common to the whole country and has, in fact, become official policy."
 - C. President Eisenhower's action in sending Federal troops to Little Rock was attacked as no more than an effort to repair the damage done to America's "propaganda image" abroad.
 - D. Soviets ridiculed suggestions that the Little Rock events would be exploited by Communist propaganda, saying that "propaganda has nothing to do with it" and that "these events show the disgrace of America and the hypocrisy of the American rulers."
 - E. However, Moscow failed to make its expected play of the racial issue to Asian-African audiences.

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- II. The East European Satellite radios have for the most part carried only news reports on the events. Poland seemed the most restrained while East Germany was more virulent than the USSR.
- A. East Germans expressed "understanding" with the US desire to silence "the worldwide attention and indignation" the events have aroused and noted it must be disquieting for some UN delegates to see that people of their color "are being persecuted" on the territory of the country where the assembly meets.
- B. Peiping waited until 26 September to report the events, and the next day commented, like Moscow, that President Eisenhower had "frantically" ordered troops to Little Rock because of "unfavorable world opinion" toward the United States.
- C. Yugoslav commentators have mostly confined themselves to factual news accounts. President Eisenhower's recent actions have been portrayed favorably.
- III. Western European press and radio comment on Little Rock has largely stressed the loss of prestige to the United States, and has generally backed President Eisenhower's use of troops in a complex situation provoked by extremists.
- A. The influential Manchester Guardian, while calling American race relations the "dark side of the moon," declared that the dark is thinning; and firmly challenged Communist comparisons of Little Rock to Budapest.
- B. Paris radio commentators almost universally deplored the "odious incidents" and "racist explosion."

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IV. Non-Communist reaction surprisingly moderate, and in many cases laudatory after President's dispatch of troops.

A. Initial reaction in Africa sparse. In Morocco, Tunisia and Ghana reporting been moderate and limited to facts. Tone of press been most condemnatory in Ethiopia.

B. Egyptian and Syrian coverage extensive and devoted to fullest anti-American propaganda. Elsewhere, mostly straight news reporting with a scattering of critical editorial comment.

C. Communist and leftist press in South and Southeast Asia exploiting Little Rock to hilt--typical headline, "This is democracy." Non-Communist press deploring racial prejudice but generally showing surprising understanding of racial progress in US. Some comment that racism not peculiarly American. Much praise use of Federal troops.

25X6 **D. Wide press and editorial coverage in Japan. Treatment reflects sensitivity to racial discrimination and strong ☐ emotionalism because of historic US exclusion policy. One widely read columnist said "that negroes are singing their spirituals with shackles still upon them."**